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L. SIMONSON • FOSCO • STEGBAUER

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STEEL

LAST GASP!



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"YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT..."



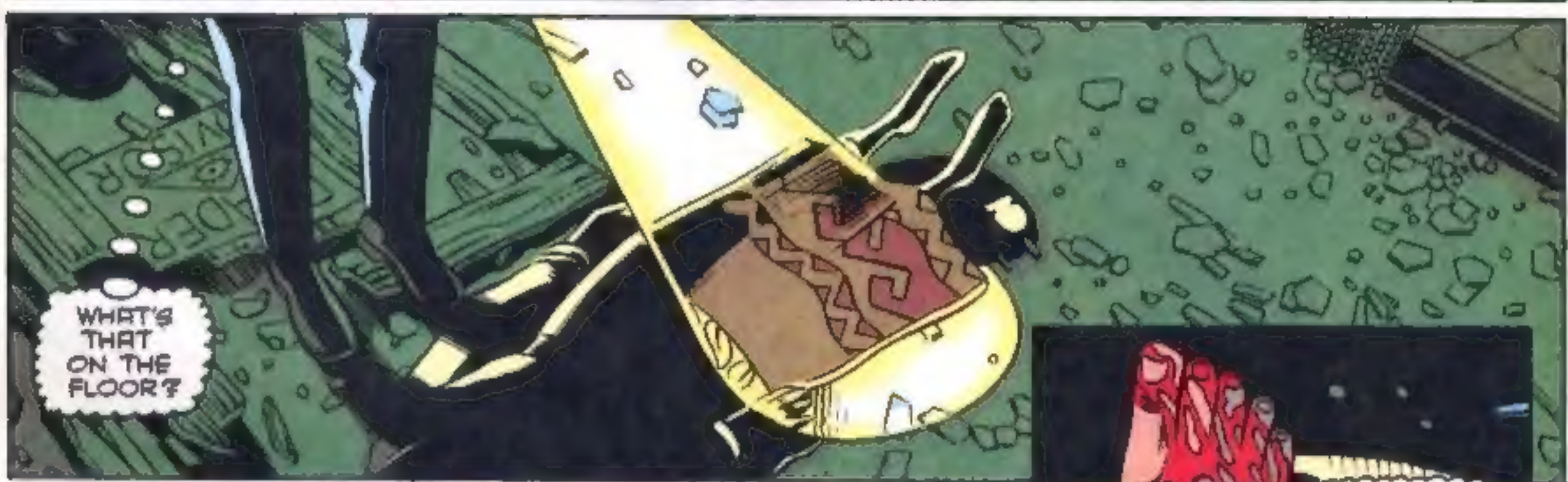
"ANYTHING YOU SAY CAN AND WILL BE USED AGAINST YOU..."

"YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY DURING QUESTIONING..."



"IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD ONE, ONE WILL BE APPOINTED TO YOU BY THE COURTS."

"GET HIM OUT OF HERE."



WHAT'S THAT ON THE FLOOR?



SOME SORT OF SYMBOL?

OH...GOD...

BEFORE SHE DIED... ROSIE LEFT US A MESSAGE...



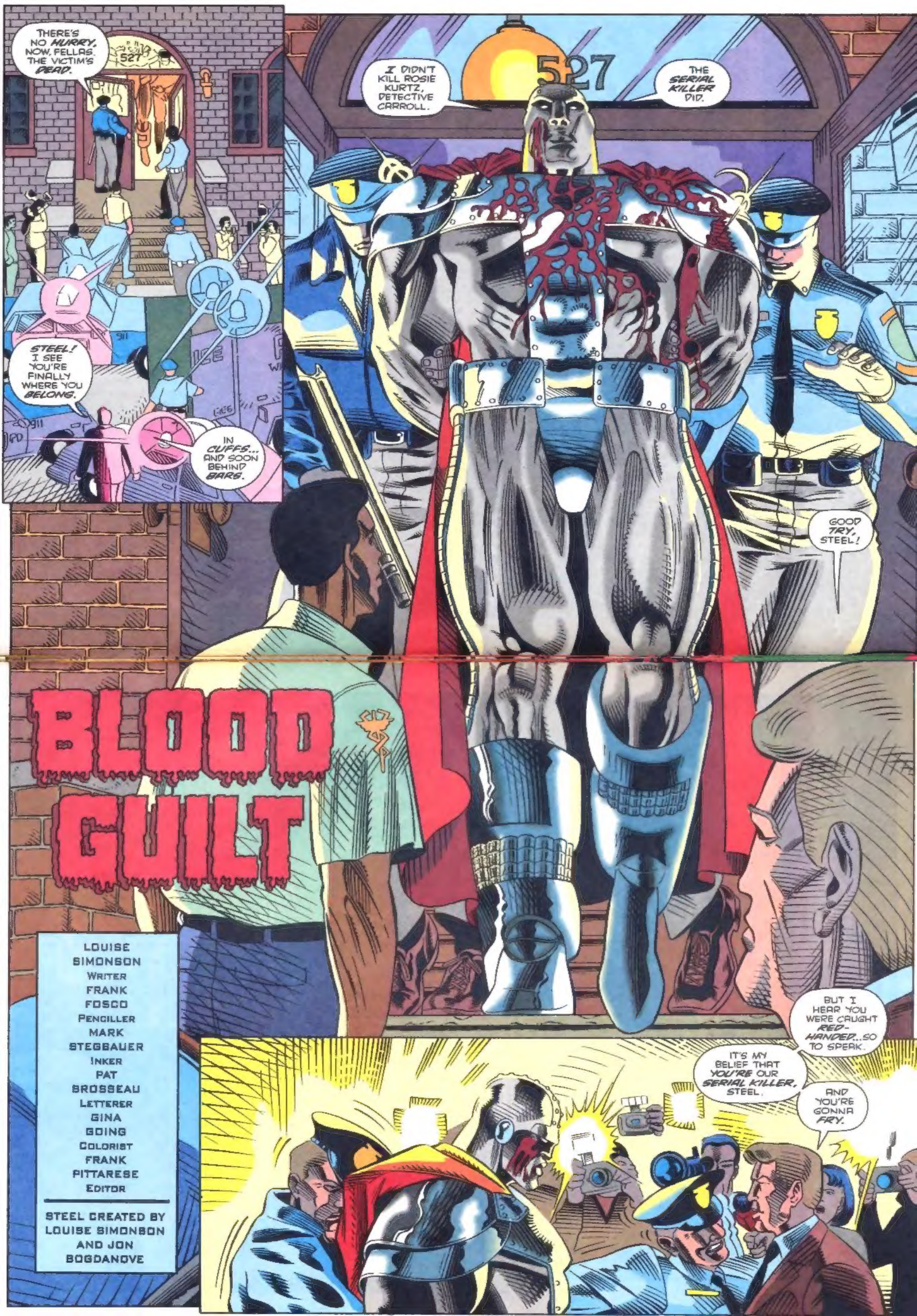
...IN HER OWN BLOOD!

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— Ha'sA — nom deplume —

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THERE'S NO HURRY, NOW, FELLAS. THE VICTIM'S DEAD.

STEEL! I SEE YOU'RE FINALLY WHERE YOU BELONG.

IN CUFFS... AND SOON BEHIND BARS.

I DIDN'T KILL ROSIE KURTZ, DETECTIVE CARROLL.

THE SERIAL KILLER DID.

GOOD TRY, STEEL!

BLOOD GUILT

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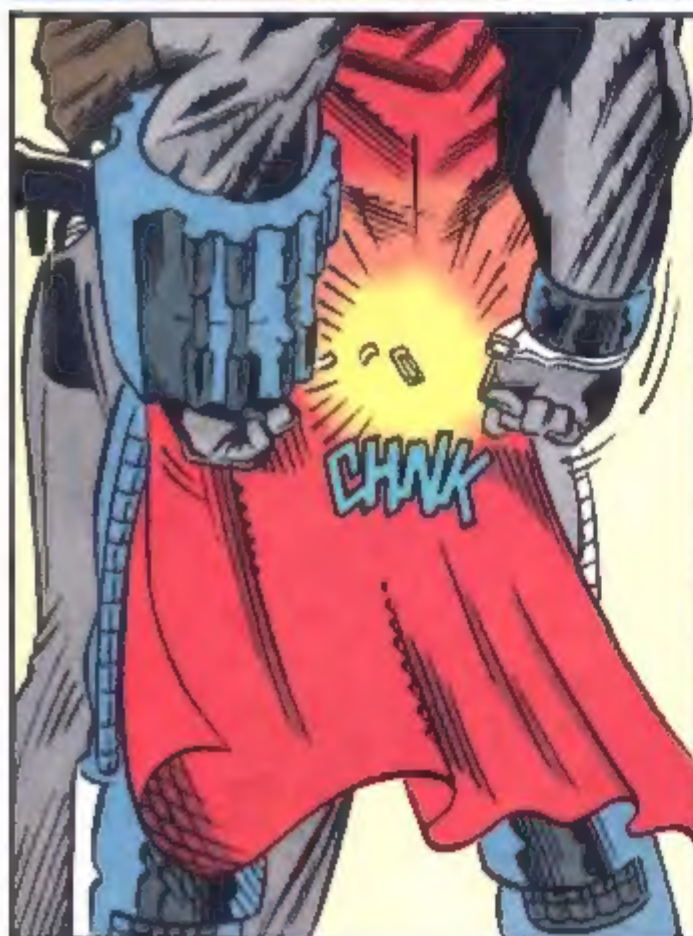
STEEL CREATED BY
LOUISE SIMONSON
AND JON BOGDANOV

IT'S MY BELIEF THAT YOU'RE OUR SERIAL KILLER, STEEL.

BUT I HEAR YOU WERE CAUGHT RED-HANDER... SO TO SPEAK.

AND YOU'RE GONNA FRY.







WHAT NOW?

GET US OUT OF HERE

WE'VE GOT YOU IN OUR SIGHTS! DROP HER!



WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

I KNOW YOU DIDN'T MURDER ROSIE...OR ANY ONE ELSE. I CAN'T LET THEM KNOW YET...



POLICE

...BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO CATCH THE MONSTER WHO KILLED HER.

NOW FITCH ME. MEET ME TOMORROW NIGHT AT MY APARTMENT--38 SOUTH STREET.

I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING.

I'LL BE THERE!

SHE'S FREE! GET HIM!



WELL... HECK!

IF HE COULD GET AWAY THAT EASY, WHY'D HE LET HIMSELF GET ARRESTED IN THE FIRST PLACE?

BAM!

K-POK!

BAM!



HEARD IT ON THE LATE NEWS. THE OTHERS ARE IN BED.

HUH?



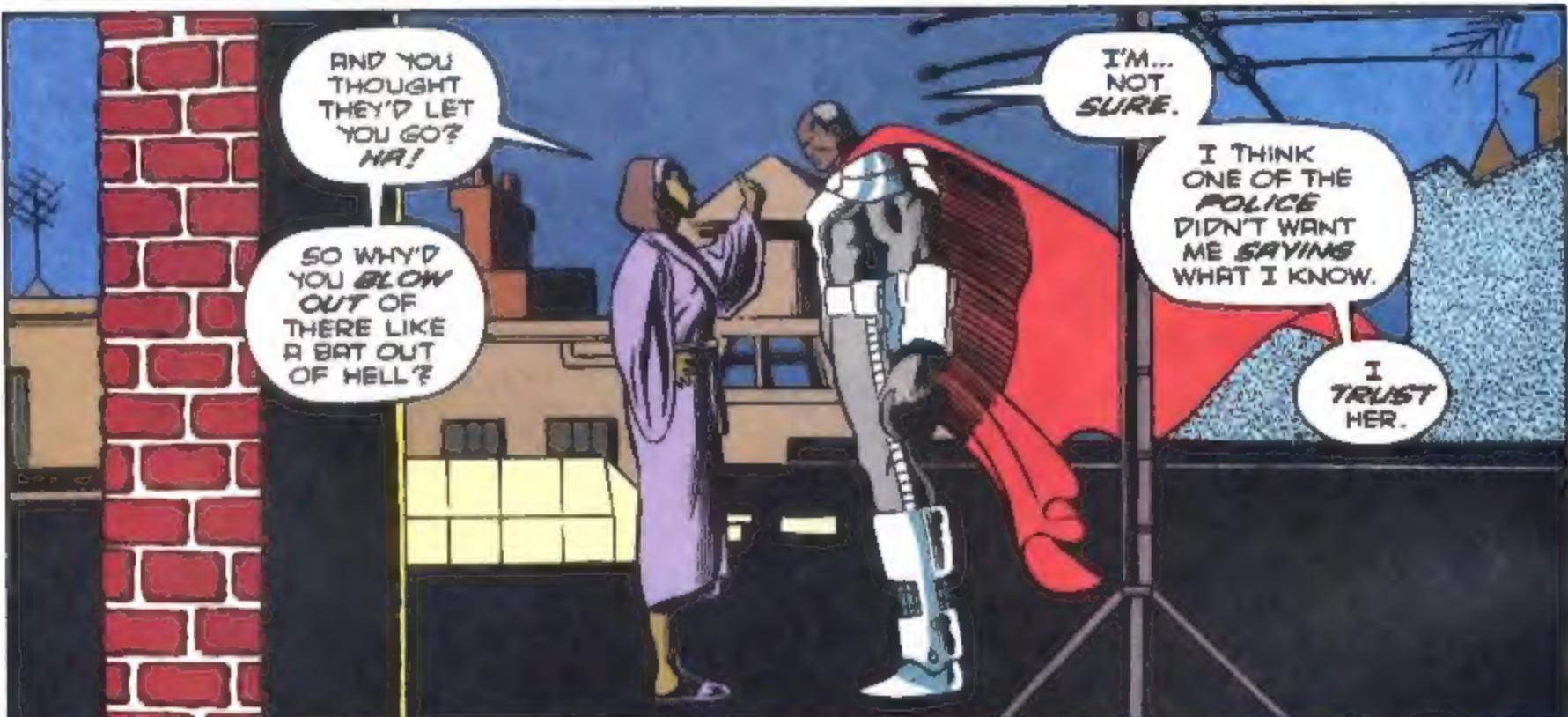
YOU'RE NO MORE A *SERIAL KILLER* THAN I AM, JOHN HENRY IRONS.

WHY'D YOU LET YOURSELF GET *AR-RESTED*?



I DIDN'T DO IT, BLONDELL. AND I HAD *INFORMATION* ABOUT THE PERSON WHO DID.

I PLANNED TO TELL THEM AND--



AND YOU THOUGHT THEY'D LET YOU GO? HA!

SO WHY'D YOU *BLOW OUT* OF THERE LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELL?

I'M... NOT *SURE*.

I THINK ONE OF THE *POLICE* DIDN'T WANT ME *SAVING* WHAT I KNOW.

I *TRUST* HER.



THAT *PRETTY LADY* COP YOU "TOOK HOSTAGE," RIGHT?

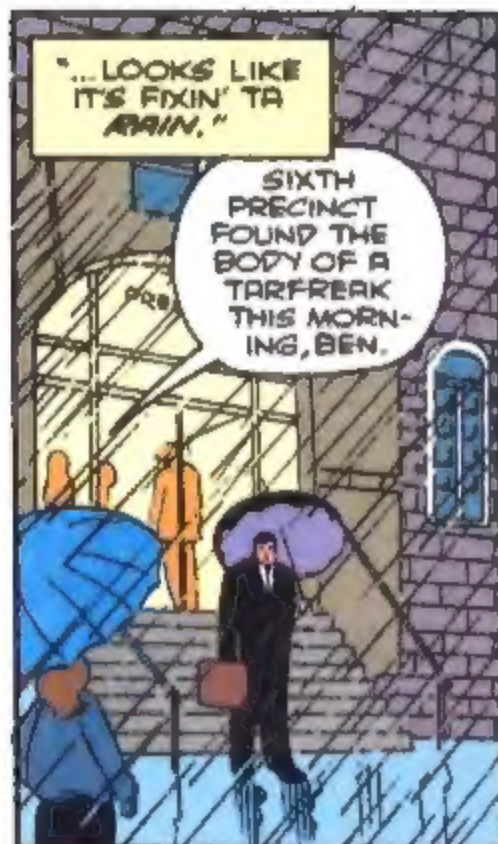
THE *KIDS*'LL HEAR ABOUT THIS, BUT DON'T WORRY. I'LL HANDLE THEM.



THANKS.

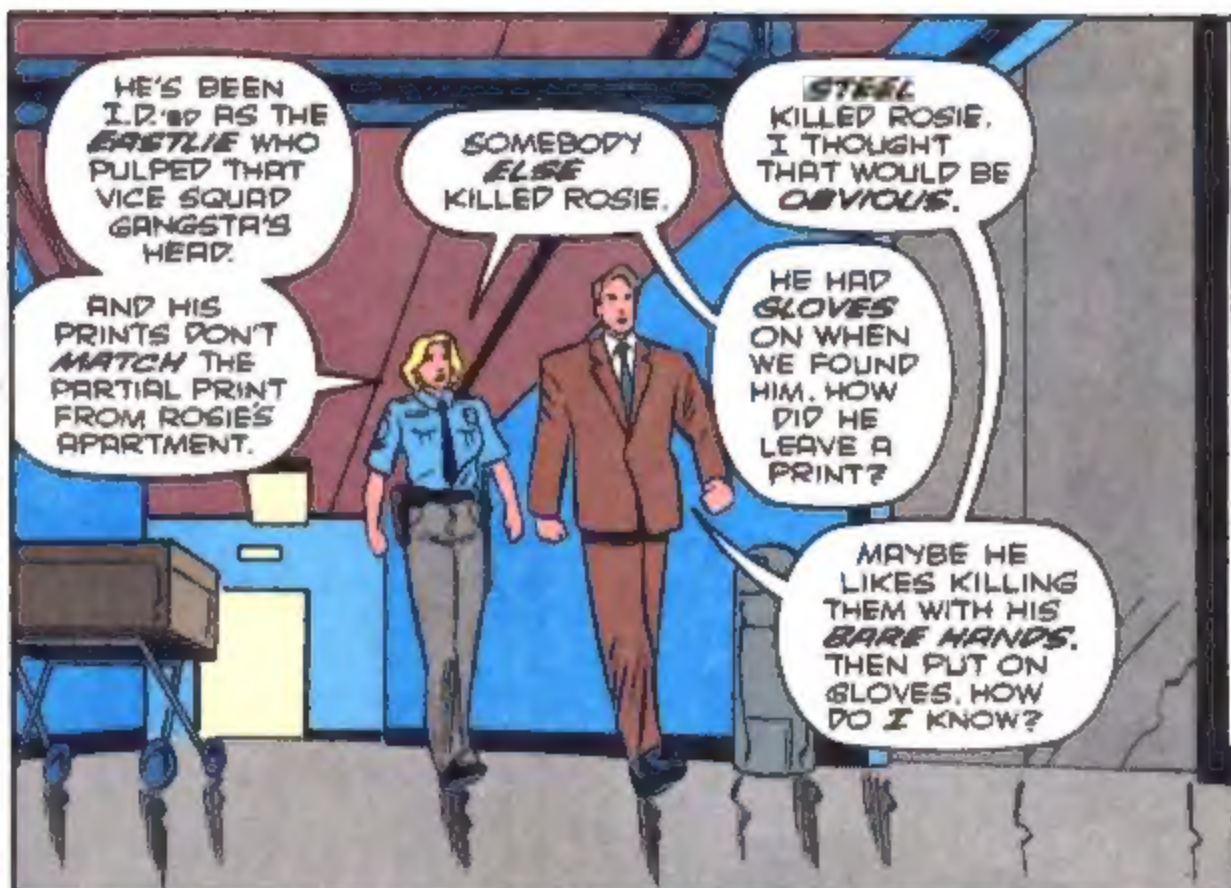
AFTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR MY *JEMAH*L, I'D'VE BUSTED YOU OUT OF THAT JAIL *MYSELF*.

COME ON IN, AND DON'T FORGET TO SHUT THE *SKYLIGHT*...



"...LOOKS LIKE IT'S FIXIN' TA RAIN."

SIXTH PRECINCT FOUND THE BODY OF A TAREFREAK THIS MORNING, BEN.



HE'S BEEN I.D.'ED AS THE **EASTLIE** WHO PULPED THAT VICE SQUAD GANGSTA'S HEAD.

AND HIS PRINTS DON'T MATCH THE PARTIAL PRINT FROM ROSIE'S APARTMENT.

SOMEBODY **ELSE** KILLED ROSIE.

STEEL KILLED ROSIE. I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE **OBSVIOUS**.

HE HAD **GLOVES** ON WHEN WE FOUND HIM. HOW DID HE LEAVE A PRINT?

MAYBE HE LIKES KILLING THEM WITH HIS **BARE HANDS**. THEN PUT ON GLOVES. HOW DO I KNOW?



"LET'S SEE IF **FORENSIC'S** HAS ANY ANSWERS."

SOMETHING SHARP... LIKE A **CLAW**... RIPPED A HOLE IN HER **JUGULAR VEIN**.

SHE COULDN'T HAVE LIVED MORE THAN A COUPLE OF **MINUTES** AFTER THE ATTACK.

ANYTHING ELSE?

SOMETHING UNDER HER **NAILS**. MIGHT BE **SKIN**.



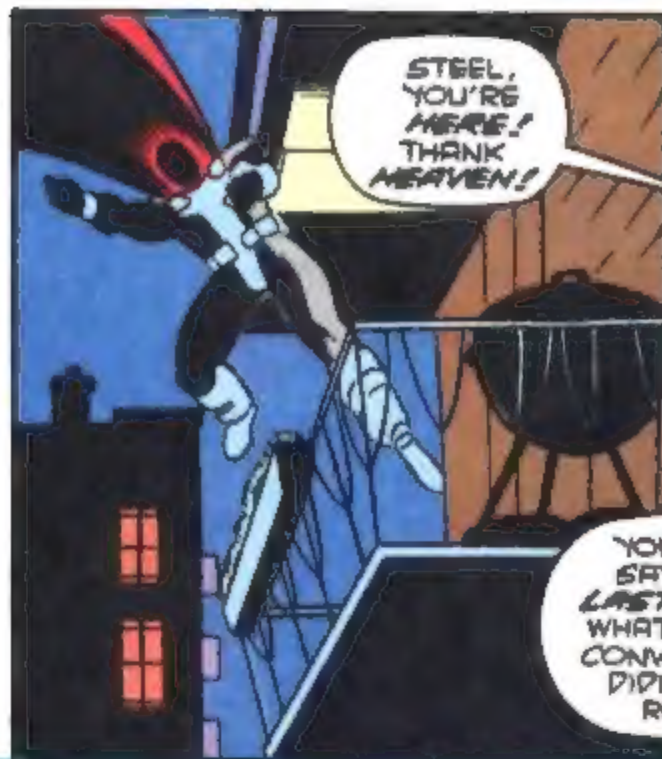
BUT IT'S LIKE NO SKIN I'VE EVER SEEN.

ANOTHER ODD THING ABOUT THIS VICTIM.

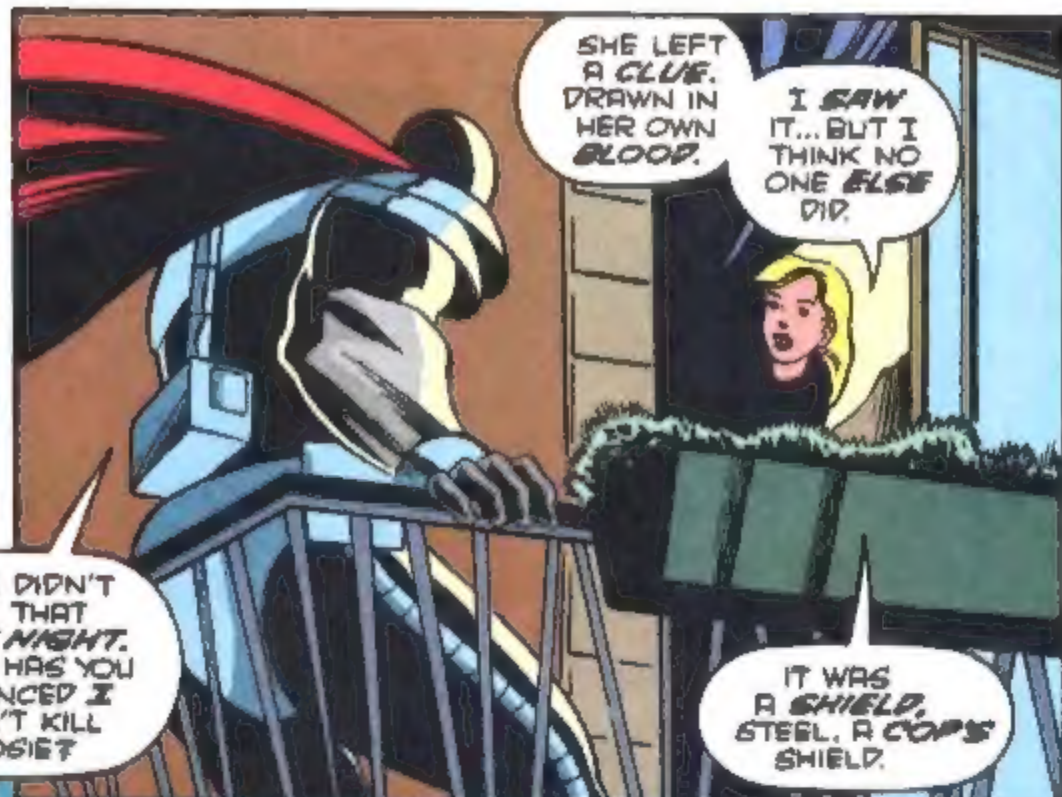


WHAT?

THIS ONE STILL HAS A **HEAD**.



STEEL,
YOU'RE
HERE!
THANK
HEAVEN!



SHE LEFT
A CLUE.
DRAWN IN
HER OWN
BLOOD.

I SAW
IT... BUT I
THINK NO
ONE ELSE
DID.

YOU DIDN'T
SAY THAT
LAST NIGHT.
WHAT HAS YOU
CONVINCED I
DIDN'T KILL
ROSIE?

IT WAS
A SHIELD,
STEEL. A COPS
SHIELD.



SHE
MUST HAVE
FINALLY
REALIZED
WHAT HER
EARLIER
VISION
MEANT.

OUR SERIAL
KILLER IS A
COP. NOW I
HAVE TO
FIND HIM.

THERE ARE ALMOST
THIRTY COPS WHOSE
ARRIVAL ON THE FORCE
COINCIDES WITH THE
MURDERS. BEN CARROLL
IS AMONG THEM.



IT WOULD
GIVE YOU
AN EXCUSE
TO CLOBBER
HIM!

ANOTHER
THING. THE
VICTIMS ALL
HAD BEEN RE-
CENTLY ACCUSED
OF CHILD
ABUSE...

...BUT
GOT OFF
BECAUSE
THERE WAS
NO PROOF.



ROSIE
WASN'T
AN
ABUSER.

ROSIE WAS
STILL ALIVE
WHEN I FOUND
HER.

NO, BUT SHE
WAS ONTO HIM.
MAYBE THAT'S WHY
SHE KEPT HER HEAD.



SHE SAID
"ALTAR"
BEFORE SHE
DIED.

WHAT DID
SHE MEAN?
AN ALTAR...
LIKE IN A
CHURCH
...?

OR ALTER...
WITH AN "E"...
AS IN ALTER
EGO?

MAYBE OUR
KILLER HAS
AN ALTER
EGO?

"...MAYBE HE'S
A MULTIPLE
PERSONALITY!"

NO!
NO!

K-KEEP
AWAY!

D-DON'T!
PLEASE!

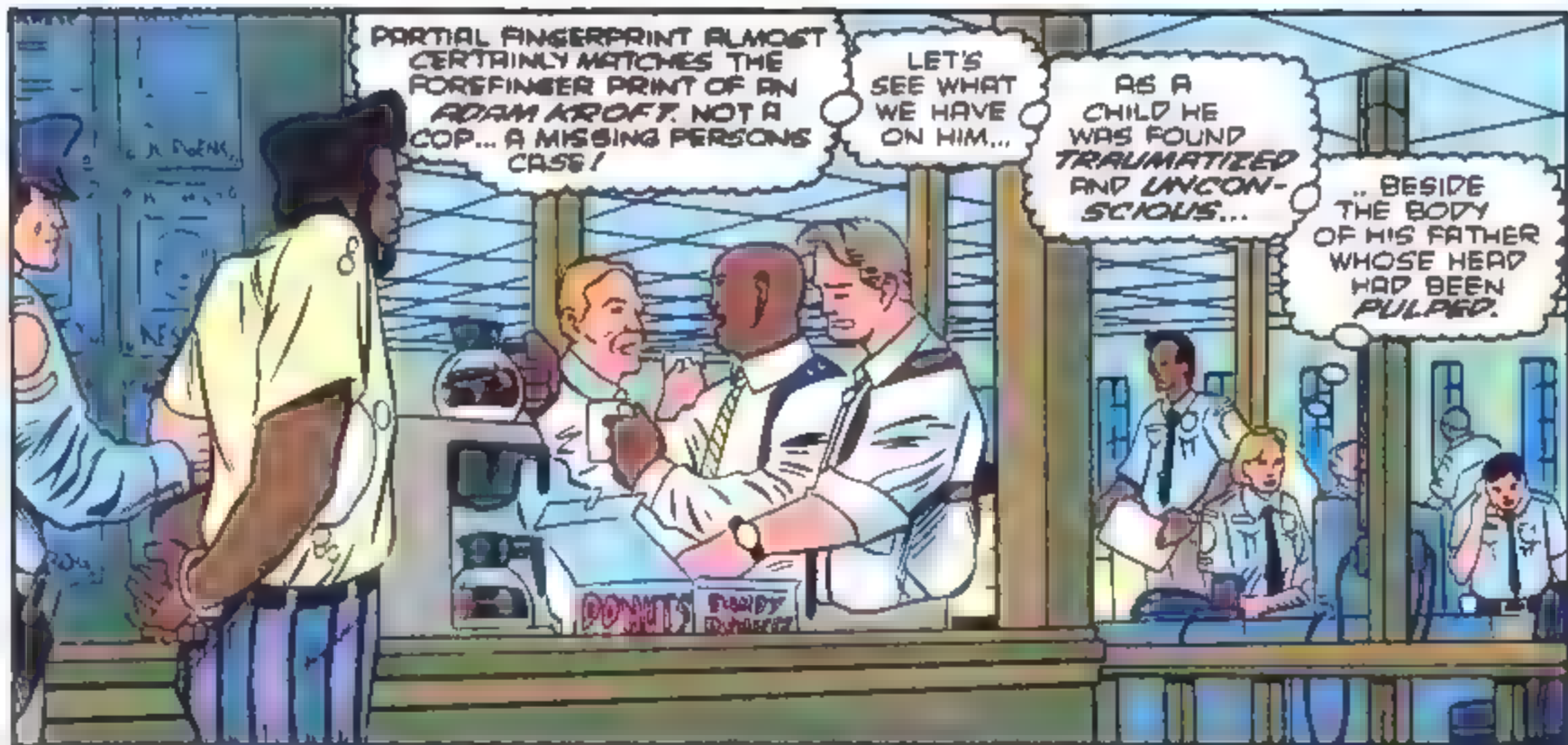
YOU
HEARD
ME!

KEEP
AWAY!

PHF-LATT!

WHAT
HAVE I
DONE...?

AAAAAAAAA!

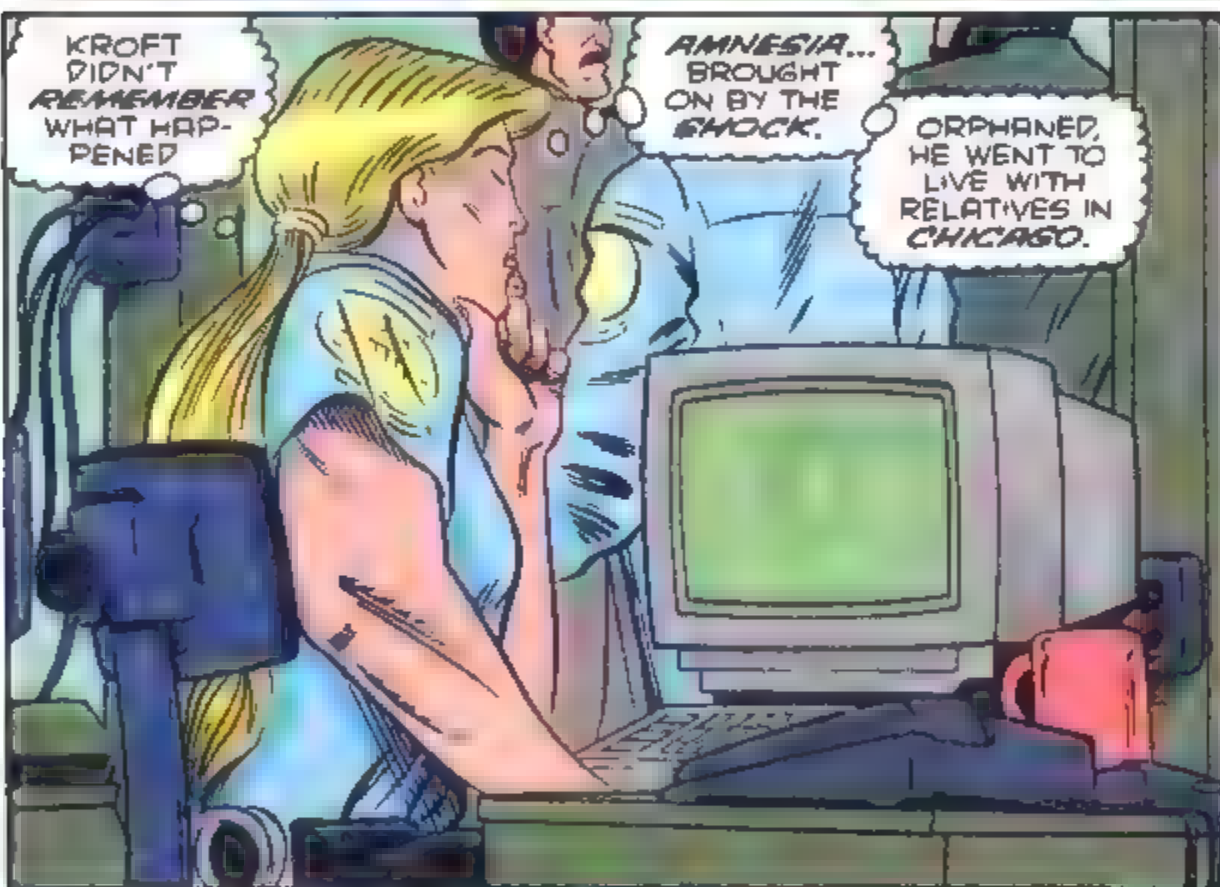


PARTIAL FINGERPRINT ALMOST CERTAINLY MATCHES THE FOREFINGER PRINT OF AN **ADAM KROFT**. NOT A COP... A MISSING PERSONS CASE!

LET'S SEE WHAT WE HAVE ON HIM...

AS A CHILD HE WAS FOUND **TRAUMATIZED** AND **UNCONSCIOUS**...

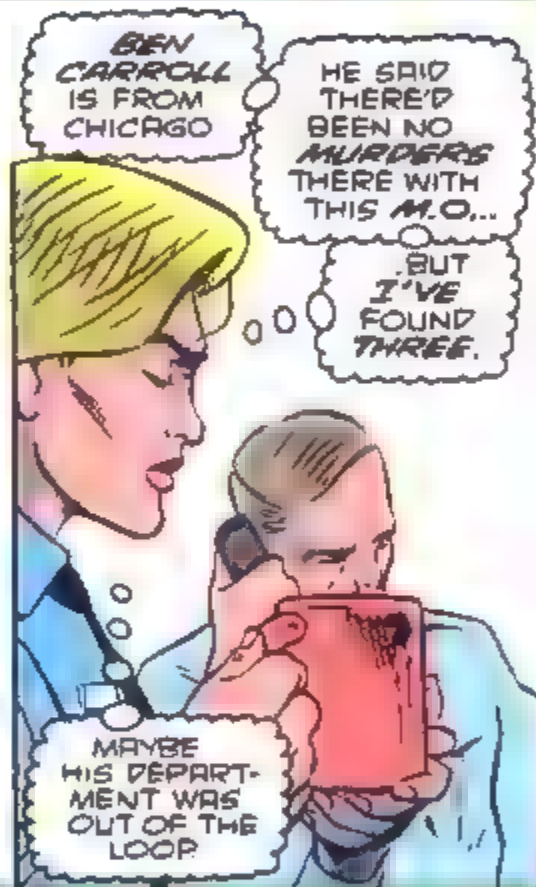
... BESIDE THE BODY OF HIS FATHER WHOSE HEAD HAD BEEN **PULPED**.



KROFT DIDN'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED

AMNESIA... BROUGHT ON BY THE SHOCK.

ORPHANED, HE WENT TO LIVE WITH RELATIVES IN CHICAGO.

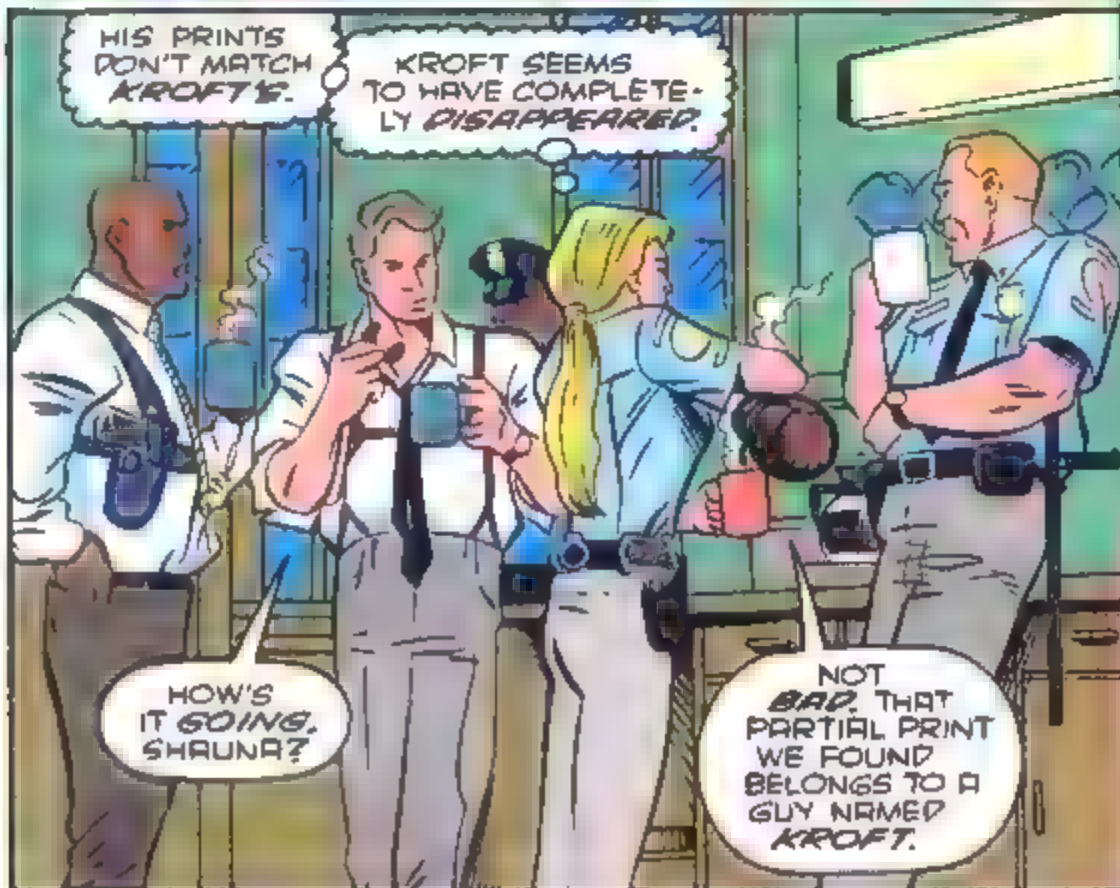


BEN CARROLL IS FROM CHICAGO

HE SAID THERE'D BEEN NO MURDERS THERE WITH THIS M.O...

BUT I'VE FOUND THREE.

MAYBE HIS DEPARTMENT WAS OUT OF THE LOOP

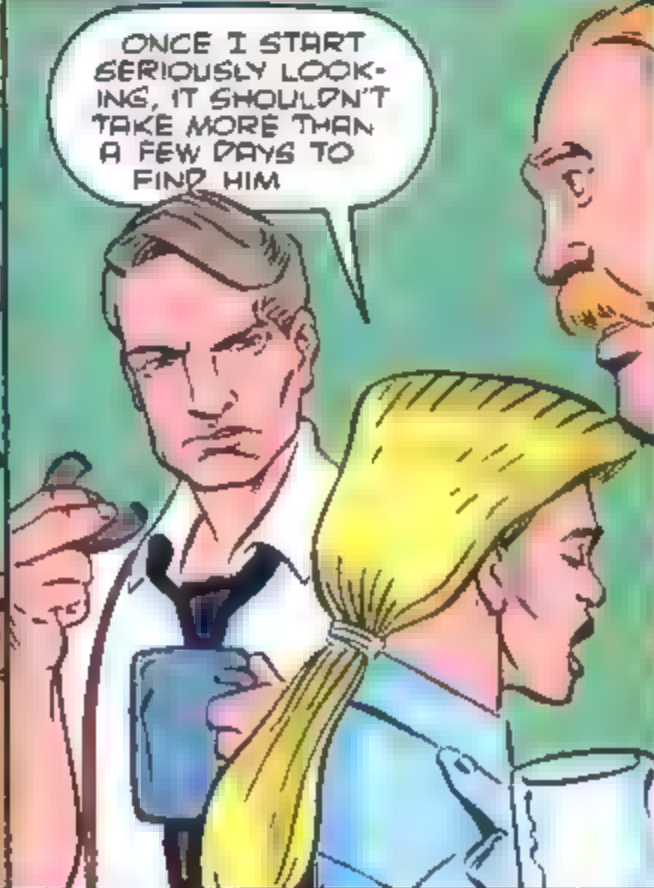


HIS PRINTS DON'T MATCH **KROFT'S**.


KROFT SEEMS TO HAVE COMPLETELY **DISAPPEARED**.

HOW'S IT GOING, **SHAUNA**?

NOT **BAD**. THAT PARTIAL PRINT WE FOUND BELONGS TO A GUY NAMED **KROFT**.



ONCE I START SERIOUSLY LOOKING, IT SHOULDN'T TAKE MORE THAN A FEW DAYS TO FIND HIM



WORD WILL
HAVE GOTTEN
AROUND THE
PRECINCT THAT
I'M ON THE TRAIL
OF A GUY NAMED
KROFT.

AND I MADE
IT SOUND LIKE
FINDING HIM
WOULD BE REAL
EASY. I WISH.

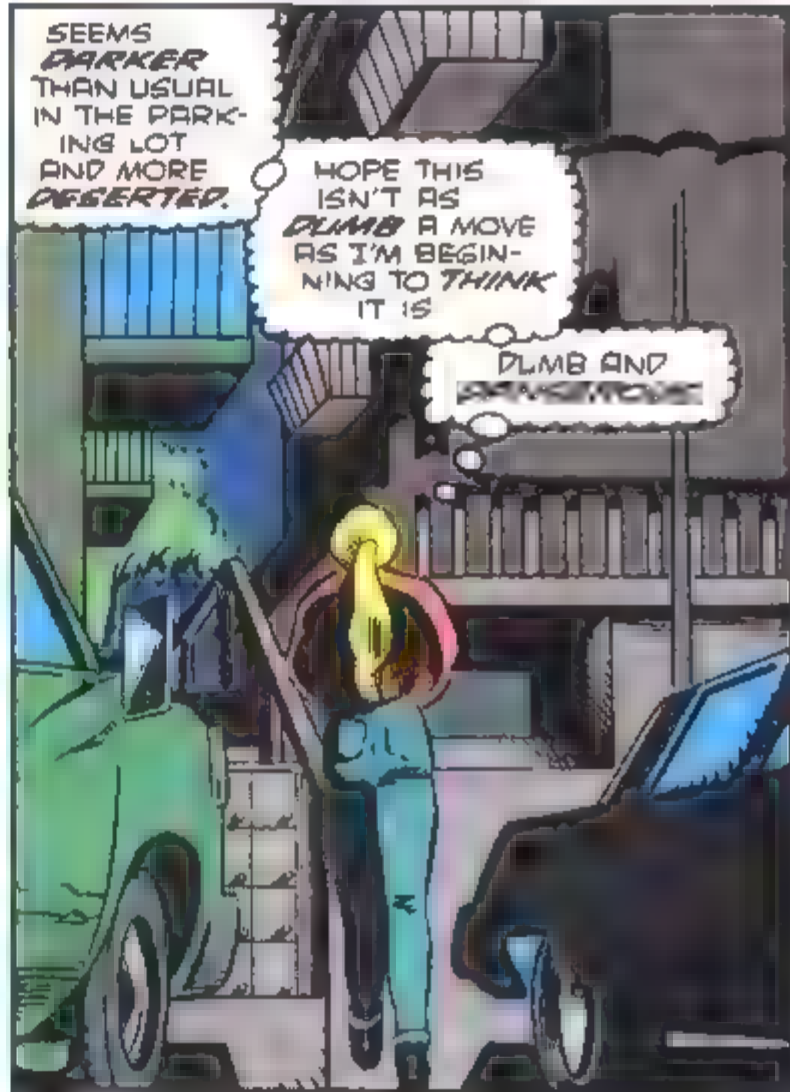
IF I'M RIGHT
ABOUT **KROFT**
BEING OUR SERIAL-
KILLER COP, **OUR**
"ALTER," HE'LL BE
AFTER ME

AND I'LL
BE **READY**
FOR HIM

NOTHING
LIKE A **.45**
AUTOMATIC TO
GIVE A PERSON
CONFIDENCE

APARTMENT'S
RIGHT ABOVE NOT
FAR.


HE MAY BE
WAITING FOR
ME **THERE.**
OR BEHIND
THE **CORNER.**
OR **ANYWHERE.**



SEEMS
DARKER
THAN USUAL
IN THE PARK-
ING LOT
AND MORE
DESERTED.

HOPE THIS
ISN'T AS
DUMB A MOVE
AS I'M BEGIN-
NING TO **THINK**
IT IS

DUMB AND
DANGEROUS



BUT HOW
ELSE AM I
GOING TO
CATCH HIM
BEFORE HE
KILLS--



KA-KAM

STEEL!
ABOUT TIME!

WAITED
ON YOUR
BALCONY...
LIKE I SAID
I WOULD

BUT HE
MOVED SO
FAST SO
QUIETLY..

--DIDN'T
KNOW HE
WAS HERE
TILL I
HEARD YOUR
SHOTS.

HE'S
DOWN!

NOT A
CHANCE!

ARMOR
PROTECTED
ME!

SKREEEE!

THOOM!
THOOM!

RIVETS
TOOK HIM
DOWN...

NOW
TO TAKE
HIM
OUT...

STEEL,
WAIT!

HE'S
CHANG-
ING!

CARROLL?

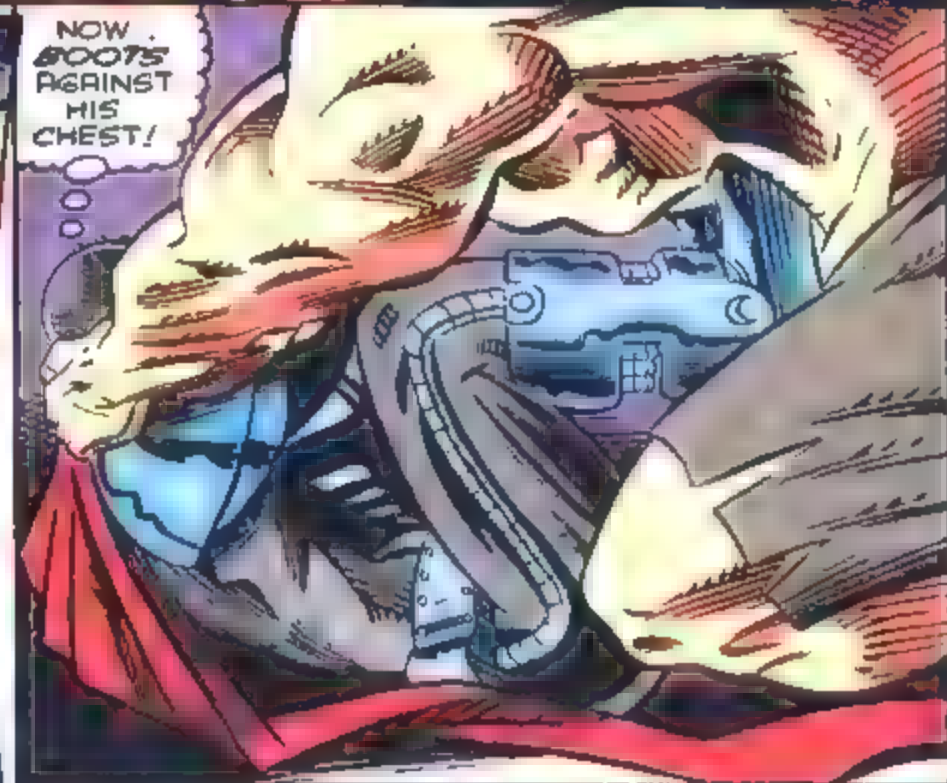
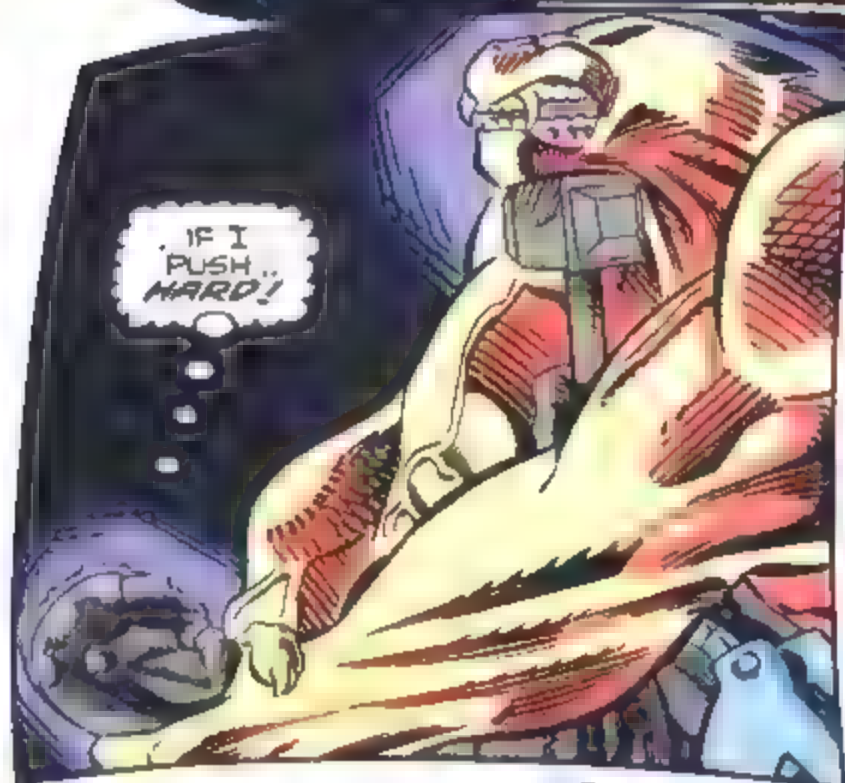
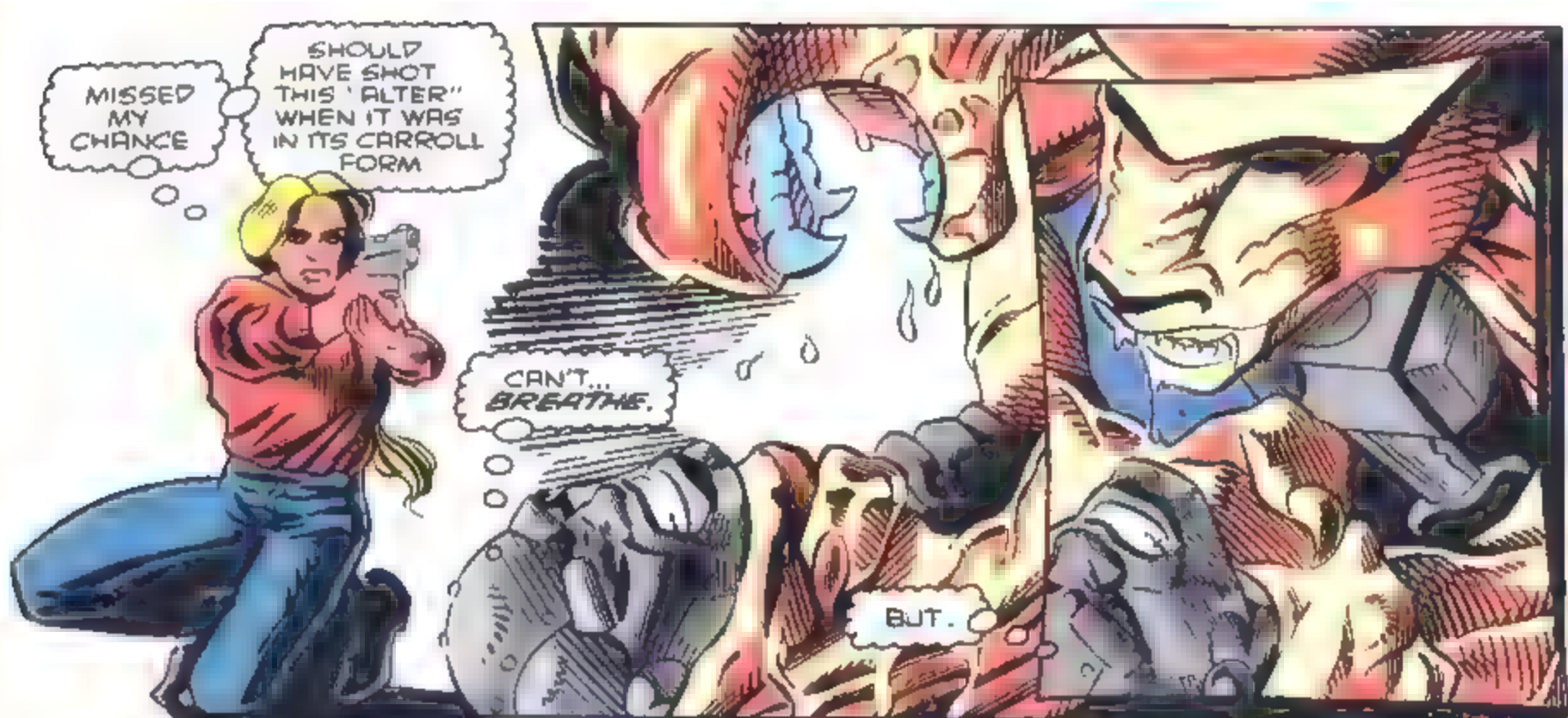
YOU'RE
THE
"ALTER-
EGO"?

THERE IS
NO
CARROLL.

THERE
IS NO
KROFT.

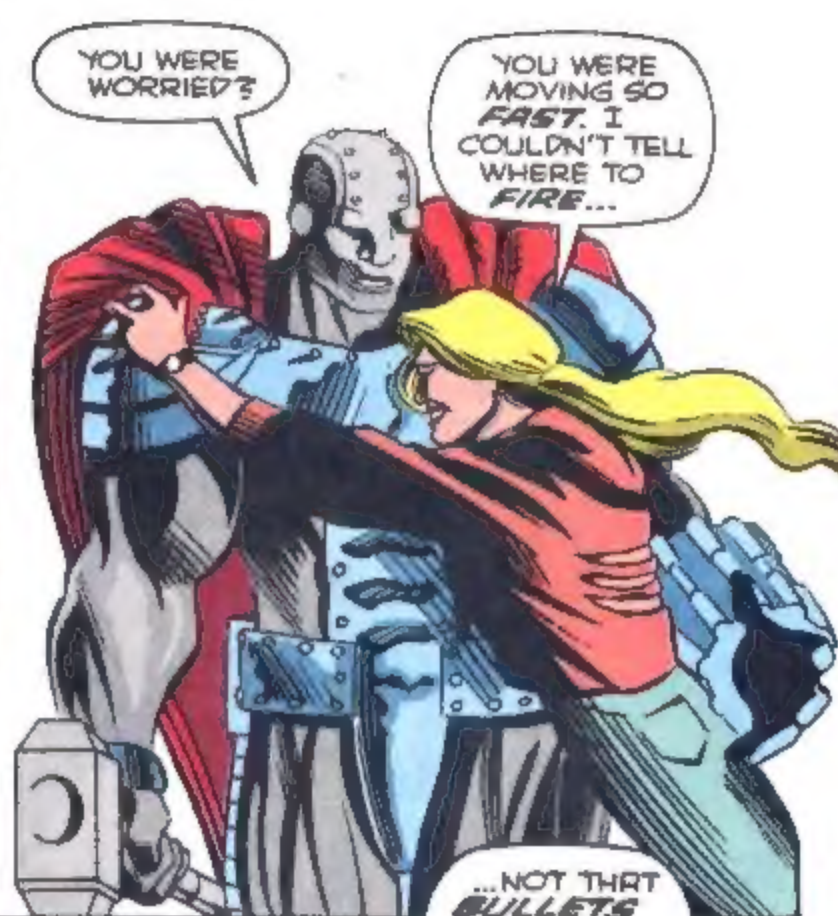
THERE IS
ONLY...

The
ALTER!





YOU *DID* IT!
THANK
HEAVEN!
I WAS SO
WORRIED.



YOU WERE
WORRIED?

YOU WERE
MOVING SO
FAST. I
COULDN'T TELL
WHERE TO
FIRE...



...NOT THAT
BULLETS
SEEM TO
FAZE THAT
MONSTER
ANYWAY.

LETTING YOU
~~SET~~ YOURSELF
UP SEEMED
LIKE A ROTTEN
IDEA WHEN YOU
SUGGESTED
IT...



LETTING
ME? IT'S
NOT LIKE I
GAVE YOU
THE
CHOICE!

...AND
WHEN I SAW
HIM *GRAB*
YOU, THE REALI-
TY SEEMED
EVEN WORSE.

I WAS
JUST UP
THERE...
ON YOUR
BALCONY...



...AND I
WAS AFRAID
I *STILL*
WOULDN'T
REACH YOU
IN TIME.

BUT YOU
DID. I GUESS
WE'RE LUCKY
ALTER HAS A
GLASS JAW.



YEAH, WE BETTER
CALL IN REINFORCE-
MENTS BEFORE HE
WAKES UP.

I DON'T
WANT TO
GO THROUGH
THAT EVER
AGAIN.

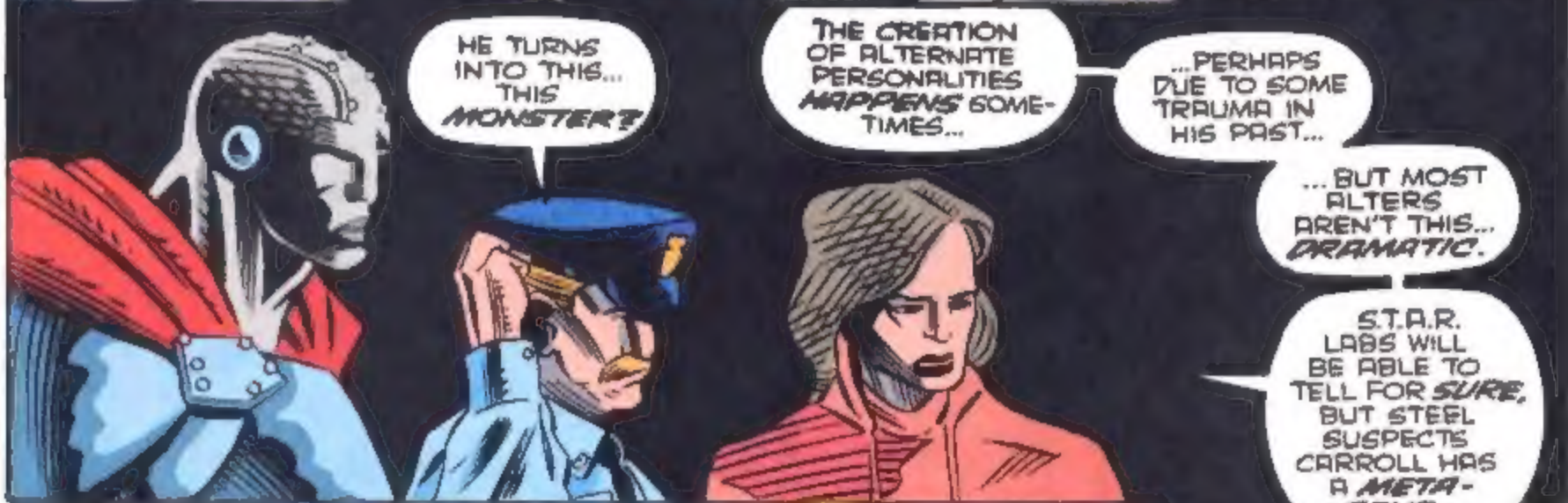


WE'RE LUCKY WE HAD THESE S.T.A.R. LABS CUFFS IN STORAGE.

YEAH, ORDINARY CUFFS WOULDN'T HOLD HIM!

I'M AFRAID SO, SPENCER.

IS THIS THING REALLY DETECTIVE CARROLL...?



HE TURNS INTO THIS... THIS MONSTER?

THE CREATION OF ALTERNATE PERSONALITIES HAPPENS SOMETIMES...

...PERHAPS DUE TO SOME TRAUMA IN HIS PAST...

...BUT MOST ALTERS AREN'T THIS... **DRAMATIC**.

S.T.A.R. LABS WILL BE ABLE TO TELL FOR SURE, BUT STEEL SUSPECTS CARROLL HAS A **META-GENE**--



CARROLL WAS A WEAKLING AND A FOOL! A CRYBABY FOOL!

GET HIM!

ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT THE LAW!



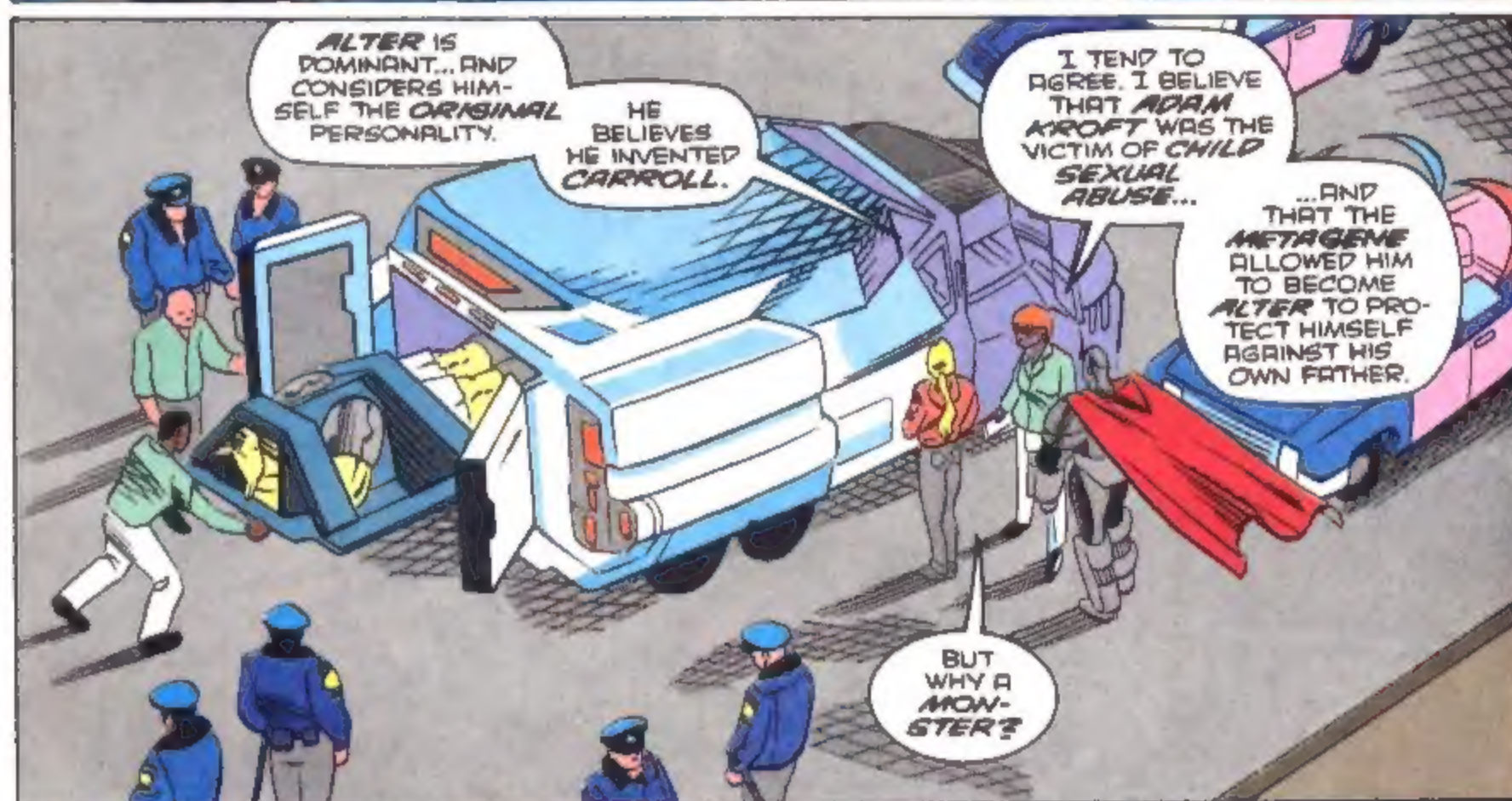
BUT THE LAW COULDN'T STOP THOSE MONSTERS!

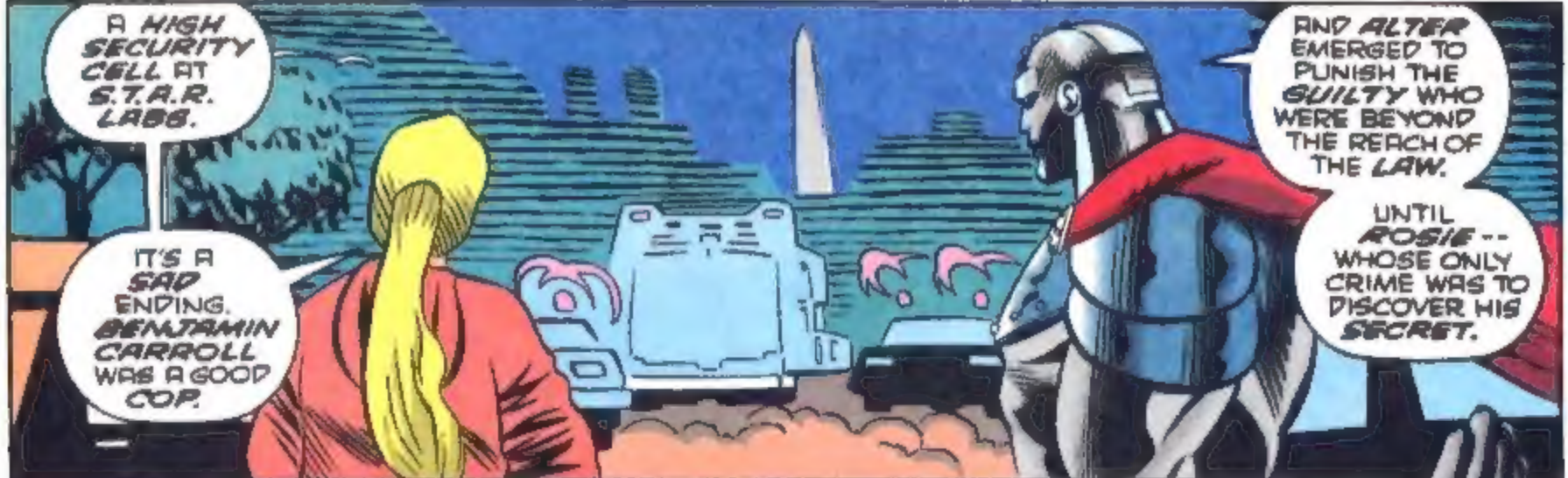
THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THEM IS TO DESTROY THEM!

ALTER DESTROYED THEM!

LOOK, CARROLL--

FORGET CARROLL! CARROLL IS GONE! ONLY ALTER REMAINS!





A HIGH SECURITY CELL AT S.T.A.R. LABS.

IT'S A SAD ENDING. BENJAMIN CARROLL WAS A GOOD COP.

AND ALTER EMERGED TO PUNISH THE GUILTY WHO WERE BEYOND THE REACH OF THE LAW.

UNTIL ROSIE -- WHOSE ONLY CRIME WAS TO DISCOVER HIS SECRET.



YOU KNOW, IN SOME WAYS, YOU'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT.

YOU PUT ON THAT MASK WHEN YOU NEED TO ACT OUTSIDE THE LAW.



THAT VIGILANTE IMPULSE... THE ONE THAT ALTER EMBODIED.

AND THAT BENJAMIN CARROLL HATED.



WHO ARE YOU REALLY, STEEL?

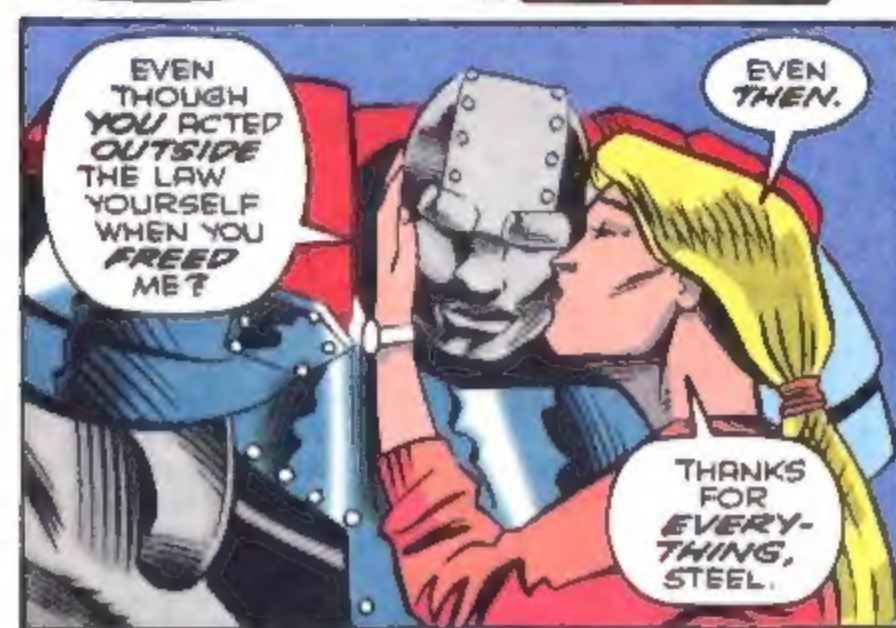
I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT.

LOOK, I KNOW ACTING INSIDE THE LAW CAN BE VERY FRUSTRATING.



I UNDERSTAND THE IMPULSE TO VIGILANTISM...

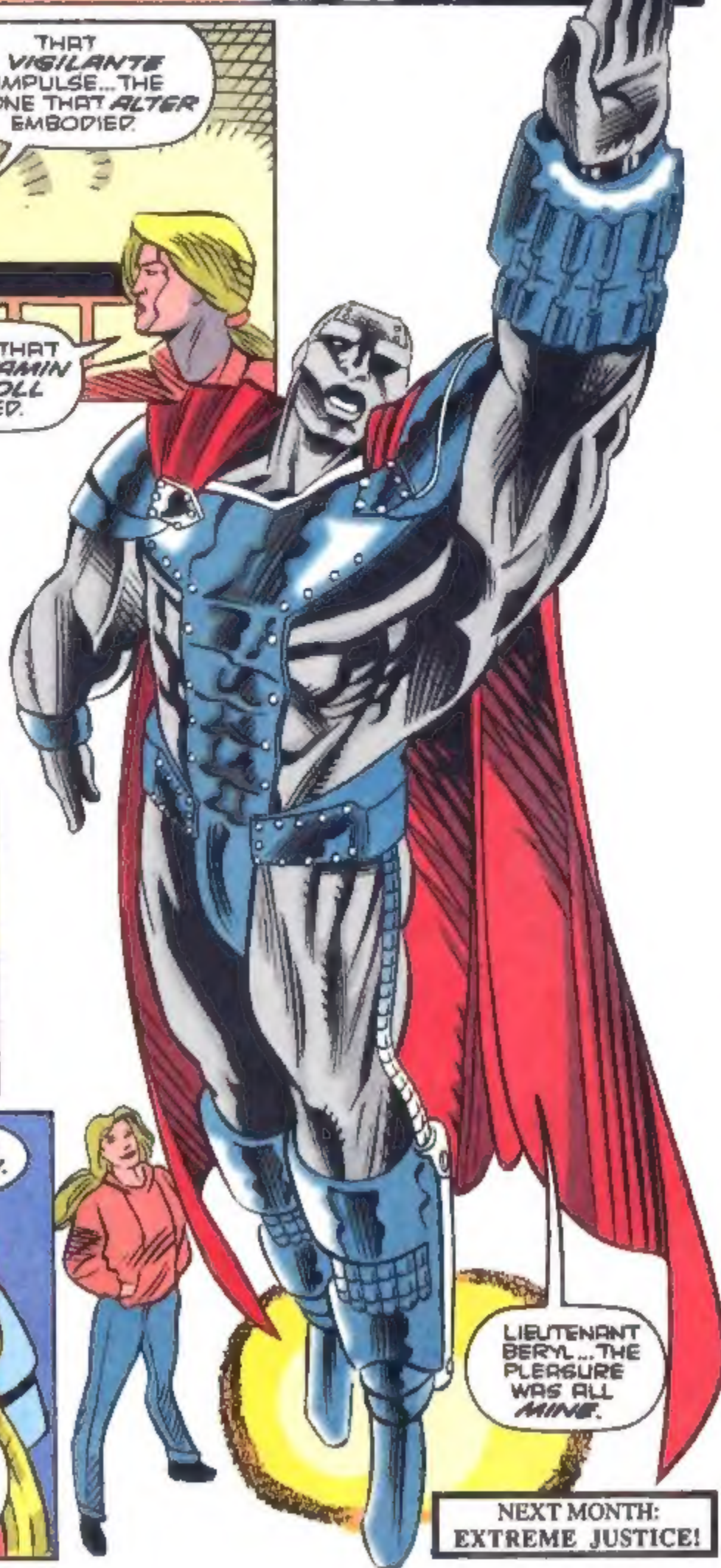
... BUT EVEN I DON'T THINK TAKING THE LAW INTO YOUR OWN HANDS IS RIGHT.



EVEN THOUGH YOU ACTED OUTSIDE THE LAW YOURSELF WHEN YOU FREED ME?

EVEN THEN.

THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, STEEL.



LIEUTENANT BERYL... THE PLEASURE WAS ALL MINE.

NEXT MONTH: EXTREME JUSTICE!